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ABSTRACT

At present, data on criteria for classroom evaluation are scarce. This study identifies elementary classroom attributes that are considered by experienced teachers in determining quality of the classroom. Characteristics of a high quality classroom listed by three groups of teachers were developed into a questionnaire survey. The survey contained demographic questions and requested teachers to rank and rate characteristics of a classroom according to their salience in determining quality. Cluster and discriminate analysis are used to identify different groups of teachers in the sample. Descriptive statistics determine the relative importance of each attribute. (Authors)

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ELEMENTS OF QUALITY IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

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ELEMENTS OF QUALITY IN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS

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The quality of educational practice as it is found in a school classroom is a fundamental yet evasive concern in public education. It is fundamental because it is one of the most frequently cited criteria for making decisions regarding educational policy. It is evasive because a stable, generally accepted definition of quality does not exist.

Many people are able to observe a classroom and report on its quality in simple and general terms. They are able to discriminate between "good" and "bad" classrooms with reasonable certainty. Something called "quality" certainly must exist. But when called upon to define the basis for such judgments, they are often at a loss to list more than a few, ambiguous considerations such as teacher-pupil relationships, teacher warmth, student achievement, and the like. It is reasonable to expect much more clarity about the basis for judging a classroom if important decisions do result from such judgments. It would also be instructional to explore the perceptions and insights of those who can critically analyze and judge a classroom.

Most would agree that the classroom teacher is in an advantageous position when it comes to determining the quality of other classrooms. Through training and experience teachers have developed a finely honed sensitivity to classroom quality. Eisner (1975) has suggested an analogy of the teacher's ability to determine a classroom's quality to that of a wine connoisseur.

> The wine connoisseur has through long and careful attention to wine developed a gustatory palate that enables him to discern its most subtle qualities. When he drinks wine it is done with an intention to discern, and with a set of techniques that he employs to examine the range of qualities within the wine upon which he will make his judgments. Body, color, nose, aftertaste, bite, flavor, these are some of the attributes to which the wine connoisseur attends. In addition, he brings to bear upon his present experience a gustatory memory of other wines tasted. These other wines, held in the memory, form the backdrop for his present experience with a particular vintage. It is through his refined palate, his knowledge of what to look for, his backlog of previous experience with wines other than those he is presently drinking that differentiates his level of discernment from that of an ordinary drinker of wine. His conclusions about the quality of wines are judgments, not mere preferences. Judgments, unlike preferences which are incorrigible, can be grounded in reasons, reasons that refer back to the wines' qualities and to other wines of the same variety. (Eisner, 1975, p.3)

Eisner suggested that connoisseurship in education is that art of perception that makes the appreciation of the complexity of educational practice possible.

Assuming that experienced teachers can and do perceive differences in classroom quality, and that the ability to make such judgments is an art that is not easily described or imparted to others, there remains a great amount of study of this ability to be done. One attack on this problem is to empirically determine the attributes of a classroom that teachers consider when they render judgments about its quality. The results of such a study would be knowledge that could be used to raise the level of consciousness of classroom observers about the basis of judgments of quality used by the experts. This knowledge would greatly clarify the ambiguities that currently exist about the definition of quality. It also would serve to empirically verify or refute the many existing logical prescriptions for criteria to consider in classroom evaluation.

Current knowledge about the elements of classroom quality can be encapsuled in the following literature outline:

I. Sources used to identify elements of classroom quality:

A. Observation and empirical inquiry (Bondi, 1970; Emmer & Peck, 1973; Good & Brophy, 1970; Harms, 1970; Harvey, Prather, White, & Hoffmeister, 1968; Neujahr, 1972; Randhawa & Michayluk, 1975; Rosenshine & Furst, 1973; Trickett & Moos, 1973; Walberg & Anderson, 1972; Wehling & Charters, 1969).

B. Logic, theory, and popular literature (Good & Brophy, 1970; Granzin & Painter, 1973; Grush & Costin, 1975; Klein, 1971; McNeil & Popham, 1973; Mendels & Flanders, 1973; Rosenshine, 1970; Ryals & Foster, 1975; Steele, House, & Kerins, 1971; St. Johns, 1971; Trickett & Moos, 1973; Wehling & Charters, 1969; Woolfolk & Woolfolk, 1974; Wright & Nuthall, 1970).

II. ~~Instrumentation used to measure classroom quality:~~ Types of elements commonly identified:

A. Teacher verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Grace, 1974; Granzin & Painter, 1973; Grush & Costin, 1975; Harvey, et al., 1968; St. John, 1971; Wehling & Charters, 1969; Woolfolk & Woolfolk, 1974; Wright & Nuthall, 1970;

B. Student behaviors (Good & Brophy, 1970; Grush & Costin, 1975; Harvey, et al., 1968; Klein, 1971; Marshall, Hartsough, Green, & Lawrence, 1977; Wehling & Charters, 1969).

C. Classroom interactions (Anderson, 1971; Centra & Rock, 1971; Emmer & Peck, 1973; Olson, 1971; Steele, et al., 1971; Swassing, 1974; Trickett & Moos, 1973).

D. Facilities (Randhawa & Hunt, 1976; Randhawa & Michayluk, 1975; Swassing, 1974; Walberg & Anderson, 1972).

E. Participant traits (Anderson, 1971; Centra & Rock, 1971; Granzin & Painter, 1973; Grush & Costin, 1975; Mendels & Flanders; 1973; St Johns, 1971; Swassing, 1974; Trickett & Moos, 1973; Wehling & Charters, 1969).

F. Organizational properties of the class (Olson, 1971; Randhawa & Hunt, 1976; Randhawa & Michayluk, 1975; Walberg & Anderson, 1972; Wehling & Charters, 1969).

G. Subject matter and cognitive level (Steele, et al., 1971; Wehling & Charters, 1969).

III. Instrumentation used to measure classroom quality:

A. Teacher evaluation forms (by students, parents, researchers) (Granzin & Painter, 1973; Grush & Costin, 1975; Steele, et al., 1971; St. John, 1971; Woolfolk & Woolfolk, 1974; Wright & Nuthall, 1970).

B. Classroom evaluation forms (Anderson, 1971; Centra & Rock, 1971; Granzin & Painter, 1973; Grush & Costin, 1975; Steele, et al., 1971;

St. John, 1971; Trickett & Moos, 1973; Walberg & Anderson, 1972; Woolfolk & Woolfolk, 1974).

C. Student performance (achievement tests) (Centra & Rock, 1971; Mendels & Flanders, 1973; St. John, 1971; Walberg & Anderson, 1972; Wright & Nuthall, 1970).

D. Observation schedules (Bondi, 1970; Good & Brophy, 1970; Harvey, et al., 1968; Klein, 1971; Marshall, et al., 1970; Medley & Mitzel, 1963; Neujahr, 1972; Rosenshine & Furst, 1973; Trickett & Moos, 1973).

E. Teacher self-analysis (Grace, 1974).

IV. Perspectives used in judging classroom quality:

A. Student (Anderson, 1971; Centra & Rock, 1971; Good & Brophy, 1970; Granzin & Painter, 1973; Grush & Costin, 1975; Mendels & Flanders, 1973; Randhawa & Michayluk, 1975; Steele, et al., 1971; Trickett & Moos, 1973; Walberg & Anderson, 1972; Woolfolk & Woolfolk, 1974; Wright & Nuthall, 1970).

B. Teacher (Grace, 1974; Klein, 1971; Trickett & Moos, 1973; Wehling & Charters, 1969; Wright & Nuthall, 1970).

C. Researcher (Emmer & Peck, 1973; Harvey, et al., 1968; Medley & Mitzel, 1963; St. John, 1971; Randhawa & Michayluk, 1975).

D. Parent (St. John, 1971).

E. Administrator (Wehling & Charters, 1969).

Despite the great amount of attention seemingly given to the study of classrooms, it is not evident that there is knowledge about the intellectual processes a connoisseur (in this case a teacher) of classrooms would engage in as judgment is rendered. The current study was undertaken as the first of many in a program of research designed to generate knowledge about how to look at, and judge, school classrooms.

The objectives of this study included the following:

1. to identify classroom attributes that are considered in determining quality
2. to determine the relative importance of classroom attributes that are considered in determining quality
3. to determine whether teachers differ on the attributes that are considered in determining classroom quality
4. if teachers do differ under objective 3, to determine the characteristics of different teacher groups.

PROCEDURES

There were three phases to the study which were labeled as follows:

Phase I -- Focus group meetings

Phase II -- Questionnaire survey

Phase III -- Data analysis and reporting

Participants in the study were regular elementary (grades 1-6) classroom teachers from the Grand Rapids, Michigan Public Schools who had taught for at least three years.

Phase I

Three focus groups of 6-12 teachers each met for approximately two hours. The teachers were volunteers who had responded to a district wide memo asking experienced teachers who wished to discuss their views of classroom quality to identify themselves. The teachers in each group were asked to picture a good classroom that would lead them to report its quality to be high and to discuss the attributes of that classroom. Teachers were then asked to picture a poor quality classroom and to discuss what it is about that classroom that would lead them to a poor quality judgment. From these discussions a list of attributes that could be important considerations in determining classroom quality was produced. The list contained 60 attributes and is contained in the attached questionnaire.

Phase II

A mail questionnaire survey was conducted with a random sample of 100 experienced district teachers. The questionnaire contained demographic questions and directions requesting teachers to rank and rate the various characteristics of a classroom (identified by the focus groups) according to their importance in determining quality. A copy of the questionnaire is attached. The response rate was 64% and a bias check revealed little cause for concern about the sample.

Phase III

A cluster analysis was used to determine whether there were different groups of teachers in the sample, based on their responses to the list of classroom attributes. A discriminate analysis was planned to identify differentiating characteristics of each of the groups

identified by the cluster analysis if identifiable groups did emerge. Descriptive statistics were also reported for each classroom attribute.

Together the data collection and analysis steps were designed to tell us several things:

1. the attributes that are considered when teachers judge a classroom's quality and descriptive statistics for each attribute to enable us to determine the relative importance of each.
2. whether teachers differ on the basis of their perceptions of classroom quality and, if they fall into identifiable groups, the differentiating characteristics of teachers who look differently at classroom quality.

In summary, the sequence of activities for the implementation of the three phases of the study were as follows:

Phase I.	Initiate meetings with District personnel
	Create and meet with focus groups
Phase II.	Instrument development
	Sample selection
	Mailout
	Follow-ups
Phase III.	Data coding
	Data analysis
	Report preparation

RESULTS

Of the 100 experienced elementary teachers sent the attached questionnaire, 64 responded after one follow-up memo. A check for

non-response bias; comparing demographic characteristics of respondents against known school district characteristics, did not lead to any concern over the representation of elementary teachers contained in our sample. There were nine questionnaires that proved to be unusable upon inspection, leaving a sample size of 55 for analysis.

The distribution of responses across elementary grades was as follows:

Grade:	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth
f	11	13	6	11	13	15

Since some teachers taught at more than one grade level, the total does not add up to 55.

The distribution of responses by age was as follows:

Age:	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70
f	16	15	9	13	2

The distribution of responses by sex was:

Sex:	Male	Female	No Response
f	11	42	2

The number of hours of non-college degree program training received by teachers over the past year took on an approximate uniform distribution with a range of 0-140 hours, mean of 40 hours, and a standard deviation of 140 hours.

Responses to the extent of personal involvement that should be taken in the development of each individual child in the class were distributed as follows:

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly disagree
f	37	14	2	1	1	

Responses to the extent to which teachers should stick with familiar materials and practices were distributed as follows:

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly disagree
f	0	3	21	18	13	

Responses to the questions regarding transfer to another profession were distributed as follows:

Strongly agree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly disagree
f	5	8	13	10	17	

The ratings of the 60 classroom attributes in terms of importance in identifying excellence in the classroom are summarized in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

The rankings of the 60 classroom attributes into three categories (the ten most important, the ten least important, and the 40 not falling into the most or least important categories) are listed in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

A cluster analysis using the Lance and Williams (1967) flexible method was performed on the rating data. The results, which were later verified using alternative hierarchical clustering techniques, indicated no recognizable clusters of subjects. As a further check on the results of the cluster analysis, discriminant function analyses were performed on two, and then three, clusters that were given. The resulting discriminant functions using the demographic variables listed on the attached questionnaire revealed numerous misclassifications.

This substantiated conclusions drawn from the cluster analysis that the subjects did not fall neatly into identifiable groups.

DISCUSSION

After beginning with no predispositions about the elements of a classroom considered by experienced elementary teachers in judging quality, the results of this study have given us a considerable amount of information with which to work. However, we view these findings to be tentative and only a first of many steps necessary to uncover the intellectual processes used by connoisseurs of school classrooms. This study cannot be viewed as a one-shot, definitive inquiry into the minds of judges. It should only be viewed as a tentative first effort which will be followed by many more studies before we can talk about the elements of classroom quality with any certainty.

A review of the findings of this study leads to the following interpretations and conclusions:

There were many distinguishing characteristics of excellence in elementary classrooms in the minds of participating teachers. Most were not surprising, but some were. Elements that surprised us included items 14 (student participation in planning), 16 (following district definition of distribution of class time), 45 (use of a self-contained classroom), 48 (frequent assignment of homework), and 59 (teacher contact with students outside of class).

Except for items 48, 59, 16, and 46, all of the 60 classroom attributes were judged as important (central tendency). However, there was disagreement (variance) among the judges on all items and this study did not help us understand the basis for this disagreement.

The attributes ranked most often in the top ten according to importance were items 13, 10, 3, 1, 2, 6, 21, 40, 34, and 36 in that order. This helped to identify the major elements teachers reported they attended to in judging an elementary classroom. The characteristics judged most frequently to be in the bottom ten were items 48, 59, 16, 46, 58, 35, 37, 45, 7, and 27 in that order. No item appeared frequently in both the top ten and bottom ten lists. Except for item 14, the elements that surprised us by appearing in the list of classroom attributes were all included in the rankings of least important attributes by responding teachers. This was a reassuring check on our own perceptions.

In considering the lack of teacher clustering that was found in the analysis, several equally plausible explanations could be provided. One is that there are no identifiable schools of thought (clusters) among elementary teachers. Replication with other elementary teachers should test this hypothesis. Another equally plausible explanation, however, is that there are schools of thought (clusters), but they were not included in our sample. That is, we had a homogeneous, and perhaps isolated, subset of the population. Replication in other geographical locations should test this hypothesis. A third reasonable explanation could be that there are schools of thought (clusters), but procedures and instrumentation prevented their discovery. The focus groups concentrated on critical aspects of classrooms that would be used to discriminate good from bad classrooms. Survey respondents responded to a selected list of most important (critical) classroom aspects as to their absolute and relative importance. The study could have concentrated on common, generally accepted, variance among schools

of thought and not directed itself to unique beliefs of population clusters. Only further research will clarify the picture.

In viewing this study as only the first of many needed to probe the mind of the connoisseur, the following are seen as necessary future studies to lead us to firm knowledge about the process of judging classrooms:

1. Replications of this study in other school districts.
2. Similar studies at the secondary level -- will the attributes differ?
3. Similar studies with other judges, such as parents, school administrators, teacher educators, and students.
4. Attacking the problem using other research approaches. For example, using a master teacher to examine and analyze several classrooms and allowing this teacher to talk freely (almost like a medical examiner) during the analysis. Experimental Studies testing hypotheses about the effects of certain classroom attributes on the judgments rendered by connoisseurs could be run using simulated classrooms. Prediction studies, using connoisseur characteristics to predict judgments of natural classrooms could also help us to understand the process of judging.

As Eisner noted so well, the mind of the connoisseur is a complex mechanism and one that we can learn much from. Teacher educators, school administrators, school policy makers, and, of course, students all stand to benefit from this knowledge. But perhaps the greatest benefactor from a program of research on the judgment process is the

educational evaluator who will use this knowledge to conceptualize and develop more sensitive evaluation methods for determining classroom quality. If such payoff can be realized, this research will prove to be immeasurably worthwhile.

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Table 1

Frequency Distributions of Ratings

of Sixty Classroom Attributes

Item		Rating				
		Low Importance				High Importance
	f / %	1	2	3	4	5
1. Students are interested in what they are doing.	f	1		2	18	34
	%	1.8		3.6	32.7	61.8
2. Students are learning basic skills.	f			1	6	47
	%			1.9	11.1	87.0
3. Students are learning how to learn, think, solve problems.	f			3	5	47
	%			5.5	9.1	85.5
4. Students ask many questions.	f		1	8	18	26
	%		1.9	15.1	34.0	49.1
5. Students work independently with minimal adult supervision.	f	1	2	10	27	15
	%	1.8	3.6	18.2	49.1	27.3
6. Teacher adjusts teaching according to individual student differences.	f		1	5	14	33
	%		1.9	9.4	26.4	62.3
7. Teacher asks many questions.	f	3	4	20	17	10
	%	5.6	7.4	37.0	31.5	18.5
8. Most daily class time is spent on the basic assignment.	f	2	4	22	20	5
	%	3.8	7.5	41.5	37.7	9.4
9. Students get along well with each other.	f		2	4	20	29
	%		3.6	7.3	36.4	52.7
10. There is good teacher-student rapport.	f	1			9	44
	%	1.9			16.7	81.5

Table 1 (cont.)

Item		Rating				
		Low Importance				High Importance
	f / %	1	2	3	4	5
11. Students are active	f	1		12	21	18
	%	1.9		23.1	40.4	34.6
12. Student displays are used in the classroom.	f		1	6	18	30
	%		1.8	10.9	32.7	54.5
13. Students know how teacher expects them to behave.	f	1		1	8	45
	%	1.8		1.8	14.5	81.8
14. Students participate in planning what is to be learned.	f	2	4	13	25	11
	%	3.6	7.3	23.6	45.5	20.0
15. Teacher has a pre-planned daily schedule.	f			8	19	27
	%			14.8	35.2	50.0
16. The distribution of class time as defined by the district is followed.	f	11	6	22	13	3
	%	20.0	10.9	40.0	23.6	5.5
17. Remedial teaching is used as needed.	f		1	4	21	29
	%		1.8	7.3	38.2	52.7
18. Prescribed curriculum is not followed when deviations are judged by the teacher to be beneficial	f			8	21	26
	%			14.5	38.2	47.3
19. Lack of student discipline problems.	f	1	1	9	14	29
	%	1.9	1.9	16.7	25.9	53.7
20. There is good teacher-parent rapport.	f	1		5	13	36
	%	1.8		9.1	23.6	65.5
21. The class size is small.	f	1	1	7	8	38
	%	1.8	1.8	12.7	14.5	69.1
22. Aides are used.	f			19	20	15
	%			35.2	37.0	27.8

Table 1 (cont.)

Item		Rating				
		Low Importance				High Importance
	f / %	1	2	3	4	5
23. There is a regular routine in the classroom	f		2	5	26	22
	%		3.6	9.1	47.3	40.0
24. Classroom confusion level is low.	f		1	6	15	33
	%		1.8	10.9	27.3	60.0
25. Students are not bored.	f		1	7	19	28
	%		1.8	12.7	34.5	50.9
26. Good classroom facilities (e.g., supplies, lighting, blackboard).	f			7	25	23
	%			12.7	45.5	41.8
27. Teacher conducts most instruction.	f	2	6	22	20	5
	%	3.6	10.9	40.0	36.4	9.1
28. Large amount of classroom space.	f	1	1	18	21	14
	%	1.8	1.8	32.7	38.2	25.5
29. Classroom temperature is comfortable.	f		1	10	23	21
	%		1.8	18.2	41.8	38.2
30. Teacher uses praise frequently.	f		1	1	18	35
	%		1.8	1.8	32.7	63.6
31. Media used frequently for instruction.	f			14	26	14
	%			25.9	48.1	25.9
32. Students demonstrate pride in their work.	f		1	2	14	38
	%		1.8	3.6	25.5	69.1
33. Teacher is aware of the physical condition of each student.	f		1	3	25	26
	%		1.8	5.5	45.5	47.3
34. Teacher enjoys job.	f		1		8	46
	%		1.8		14.5	83.6

Table 1 (cont.)

Item		Rating				
		Low Importance				High Importance
	f / %	1	2	3	4	5
35. Students frequently participate in school extracurricular activities.	f	1	4	21	17	9
	%	1.9	7.7	40.4	32.7	17.3
36. Parents are actively involved with their child's education.	f		2	5	18	30
	%		3.6	9.1	32.7	54.5
37. Teacher frequently participates in school extracurricular activities.	f	1	2	21	23	7
	%	1.9	3.7	38.9	42.6	13.0
38. There is low student transience during the school year.	f	1		9	22	23
	%	1.8		16.4	40.0	41.8
39. Curriculum objectives are used.	f		1	16	23	15
	%		1.8	29.1	41.8	27.3
40. There is honest communication between student and teacher.	f		1		10	43
	%		1.9		18.5	79.6
41. Substantial time is set aside for individual student attention.	f		1	9	19	26
	%		1.8	16.4	34.5	47.3
42. Teacher uses many teaching methods.	f		1	3	19	31
	%		1.9	5.6	35.2	57.4
43. Student learning is long lasting, permanent.	f		1	1	27	25
	%		1.9	1.9	50.0	46.3
44. Teacher shares personal experiences with students.	f	2	4	11	24	13
	%	3.7	7.4	20.4	44.4	24.1
45. Classroom is self-contained.	f	6	5	18	12	11
	%	11.5	9.6	34.6	23.1	21.2
46. Instruction is rarely interrupted by unplanned happenings.	f	7	11	20	14	3
	%	12.7	20.0	36.4	25.5	5.5

Table 1 (cont.)

Item		Rating				
		Low Importance				High Importance
	f / %	1	2	3	4	5
47. Mix of ethnic, economic groups in the class.	f	3	4	21	15	12
	%	5.5	7.3	38.2	27.3	21.8
48. Homework frequently assigned.	f	12	12	23	5	3
	%	21.8	21.8	41.8	9.1	5.5
49. Consistently high attendance.	f		1	2	24	28
	%		1.8	3.6	43.6	50.9
50. Teacher not constrained by regulations stipulated by administrators.	f	2	3	15	19	15
	%	3.7	5.6	27.8	35.2	27.8
51. Students enjoy learning on their own.	f		1	3	20	31
	%		1.8	5.5	36.4	56.4
52. Teacher frequently discusses teaching with other teachers.	f	1	2	7	26	18
	%	1.9	3.7	13.0	48.1	33.3
53. Classroom is neat in appearance.	f	1	4	12	21	16
	%	1.9	7.4	22.2	38.9	29.6
54. Teacher time not spent on administrative tasks (e.g., milk money).	f	1	1	8	21	23
	%	1.9	1.9	14.8	38.9	42.6
55. Teacher is aware of new teaching programs.	f		1	5	22	27
	%		1.8	9.1	40.0	49.1
56. Teacher is aware of how class curriculum fits into the total school curriculum.	f			8	25	22
	%			14.5	45.5	40.0
57. Students are tested frequently to determine progress.	f	3	5	19	21	7
	%	5.5	9.1	34.5	38.2	12.7
58. Students are neat in appearance.	f	4	6	26	11	7
	%	7.4	11.1	48.1	20.4	13.0

Table 1 (cont.)

Item		Rating				
		Low Importance				High Importance
	f / %	1	2	3	4	5
59. Teacher contact with his/her students outside of class.	f	1	15	25	12	2
	%	1.8	27.3	45.5	21.8	3.6
60. Teacher is neat in appearance.	f			11	20	23
	%			20.4	37.0	42.6

Table 2

Frequency Distributions of Rankings

of Sixty Classroom Attributes

Item		Category		
		Most Important	Unranked	Least Important
	f / %	1	2	3
1. Students are interested in what they are doing.	f	25	30	
	%	45.5	54.5	
2. Students are learning basic skills.	f	24	31	
	%	43.6	56.4	
3. Students are learning how to learn, think, solve problems.	f	27	27	1
	%	49.1	49.1	1.8
4. Students ask many questions.	f	4	50	1
	%	7.3	90.9	1.8
5. Students work independently with minimal adult supervision.	f	4	46	5
	%	7.3	83.6	9.1
6. Teacher adjusts teaching according to individual student differences.	f	22	32	1
	%	40.0	58.2	1.8
7. Teacher asks many questions.	f	1	36	18
	%	1.8	65.5	32.7
8. Most daily class time is spent on the basic assignment.	f	2	41	12
	%	3.6	74.5	21.8
9. Students get along well with each other.	f	11	44	
	%	20.0	80.0	
10. There is good teacher-student rapport	f	27	28	
	%	49.1	50.9	

Table 2 (cont.)

Item		Category		
		Most Important	Unranked	Least Important
	f / %	1	2	3
11. Students are active.	f	2	45	8
	%	3.6	81.8	14.5
12. Student displays are used in the classroom.	f	4	50	1
	%	7.3	90.9	1.8
13. Students know how teacher expects them to behave.	f	31	24	
	%	56.4	43.6	
14. Students participate in planning what is to be learned	f	3	41	11
	%	5.5	74.5	20.0
15. Teacher has a pre-planned daily schedule.	f	7	47	1
	%	12.7	85.5	1.8
16. The distribution of class time as defined by the district is followed.	f	1	25	29
	%	1.8	45.5	52.7
17. Remedial teaching is used as needed.	f	10	45	
	%	18.2	81.8	
18. Prescribed curriculum is not followed when deviations are judged by the teacher to be beneficial.	f	7	45	3
	%	12.7	81.8	5.5
19. Lack of student discipline problems.	f	9	44	2
	%	16.4	80.0	3.6
20. There is good teacher-parent rapport.	f	15	40	
	%	27.3	72.7	
21. The class size is small.	f	22	33	
	%	40.0	60.0	
22. Aides are used.	f	2	40	13
	%	3.6	72.7	23.6

Table 2 (cont.)

Item		Category		
		Most Important	Unranked	Least Important
	f	1	2	3
	%			
23. There is a regular routine in the classroom.	f	8	41	6
	%	14.5	74.5	10.9
24. Classroom confusion level is low.	f	7	46	2
	%	12.7	83.6	3.6
25. Students are not bored.	f	5	48	2
	%	9.1	87.3	3.6
26. Good classroom facilities (e.g., supplies, lighting, blackboardP.	f	7	46	2
	%	12.7	83.6	3.6
27. Teacher conducts most instruction.	f		37	18
	%		67.3	32.7
28. Large amount of classroom space.	f	2	36	17
	%	3.6	65.5	30.9
29. Classroom temperature is comfortable.	f	4	50	1
	%	7.3	90.9	1.8
30. Teacher uses praise frequently.	f	16	39	
	%	29.1	70.9	
31. Media used frequently for instruction	f	2	47	6
	%	3.6	85.5	10.9
32. Students demonstrate pride in their work.	f	10	45	
	%	18.2	81.8	
33. Teacher is aware of the physical condition of each student.	f	6	48	1
	%	10.9	87.3	1.8
34. Teacher enjoys job.	f	21	34	
	%	38.2	61.8	

Table 2 (cont.)

Item		Category		
		Most Important	Unranked	Least Important
	f / %	1	2	3
35. Students frequently participate in school extracurricular activities.	f		33	22
	%		60.0	40.0
36. Parents are actively involved with their child's education.	f	20	34	1
	%	36.4	61.8	1.8
37. Teacher frequently participates in school extracurricular activities.	f	1	32	22
	%	1.8	58.2	40.0
38. There is low student transience during the school year.	f	10	41	4
	%	18.2	74.5	7.3
39. Curriculum objectives are used.	f	5	43	7
	%	9.1	78.2	12.7
40. There is honest communication between student and teacher.	f	22	33	
	%	40.0	60.0	
41. Substantial time is set aside for individual student attention.	f	12	42	1
	%	21.8	76.4	1.8
42. Teacher uses many teaching methods.	f	15	39	1
	%	27.3	70.9	1.8
43. Student learning is long lasting, permanent.	f	12	42	1
	%	21.8	76.4	1.8
44. Teacher shares personal experiences with students.	f		39	16
	%		70.9	29.1
45. Classroom is self-contained.	f	5	29	21
	%	9.1	52.7	38.2
46. Instruction is rarely interrupted by unplanned happenings.	f		29	26
	%		52.7	47.3

Table 2 (cont.)

Item		Category		
		Most Important	Unranked	Least Important
	f / %	1	2	3
47. Mix of ethnic, economic groups in the class.	f	3	42	10
	%	5.5	76.4	18.2
48. Homework frequently assigned.	f		17	38
	%		30.9	69.1
49. Consistently high attendance.	f	9	45	1
	%	16.4	81.8	1.8
50. Teacher not constrained by regulations stipulated by administrators.	f	4	43	8
	%	7.3	78.2	14.5
51. Students enjoy learning on their own.	f	11	43	1
	%	20.0	78.2	1.8
52. Teacher frequently discusses teaching with other teachers.	f	6	38	11
	%	10.9	69.1	20.0
53. Classroom is neat in appearance.	f	2	44	9
	%	3.6	80.0	16.4
54. Teacher time not spent on administrative tasks (e.g., milk money).	f	5	37	13
	%	9.1	67.3	23.6
55. Teacher is aware of new teaching programs.	f	7	47	1
	%	12.7	85.5	1.8
56. Teacher is aware of how class curriculum fits into the total school curriculum.	f	4	51	
	%	7.3	92.7	
57. Students are tested frequently to determine progress.	f	2	37	16
	%	3.6	67.3	29.1
58. Students are neat in appearance.	f	1	31	23
	%	1.8	56.4	41.8

Table 2 (cont.)

Item		Category		
		Most Important	Unranked	Least Important
	f / %	1	2	3
59. Teacher contact with his/her students outside of class.	f		21	34
	%		38.2	61.8
60. Teacher is neat in appearance.	f	5	45	5
	%	9.1	81.8	9.1

ATTACHMENT

1. At what grade level are you teaching this year? (Check all that apply)

____ first grade	____ third grade	____ fifth grade
____ second grade	____ fourth grade	____ sixth grade

2. What is your age? (Check one)

____ 21-30 years	____ 41-50 years	____ 61-70 years
____ 31-40 years	____ 51-60 years	

3. What is your sex? (Check one) ____ female ____ male

4. We are interested in knowing the number of school districts with which you have been associated. In the following table, please indicate your teaching history using one line for each district in which you have taught.

District in which you taught (Start with most recent)	Years you were at this district	Grades in which you taught

5. Please indicate your college educational history below.

Degree and major	Year degree received	Institution from which degree received

6. About how many hours of training not associated with a college degree program have you received in the past year (e.g., workshops, conferences, inservice)?

Approximately ____ hours

7. To what extent do you feel teachers should take a personal interest in the development of each individual child in the class? (Circle your response)

Strongly agree — Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

8. To what extent do you agree that teachers should stick by materials and practices they have used previously rather than trying new things they are unfamiliar with? (Circle your response)

Strongly agree — Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

9. To what extent do you agree that you would seriously consider transferring to another profession if the ideal opportunity existed? (Circle your response)

Strongly agree — Strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5

Please rate, from your own experience, each of the following characteristics of an elementary classroom according to its importance in identifying an excellent classroom. Use the following scale to record your ratings by circling one of the following code numbers associated with a rating of importance for each characteristic.

Characteristic	Importance for determining excellence in an elementary classroom, based on your experience. Very Low Importance				Very High Importance
Section A					
1. Students are interested in what they are doing.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Students are learning basic skills.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Students are learning how to learn, think, solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Students ask many questions.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Students work independently with minimal adult supervision.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teacher adjusts teaching according to individual student differences.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Teacher asks many questions.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Most daily class time is spent on the basic assignment.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Students get along well with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
10. There is good teacher-student rapport.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Students are active.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Student displays are used in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
Section B					
13. Students know how teacher expects them to behave.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Students participate in planning what is to be learned.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Teacher has a pre-planned daily schedule.	1	2	3	4	5
16. The distribution of class time as defined by the district is followed.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Remedial teaching is used as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Prescribed curriculum is not followed when deviations are judged by the teacher to be beneficial.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Lack of student discipline problems.	1	2	3	4	5
20. There is good teacher-parent rapport.	1	2	3	4	5
21. The class size is small.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Aides are used.	1	2	3	4	5
23. There is a regular routine in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Classroom confusion level is low.	1	2	3	4	5
Section C					
25. Students are not bored.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Good classroom facilities (e.g., supplies, lighting, blackboard).	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teacher conducts most instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Large amount of classroom space.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Classroom temperature is comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Teacher uses praise frequently.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Media used frequently for instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Students demonstrate pride in their work.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teacher is aware of the physical condition of each student.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Teacher enjoys job.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Students frequently participate in school extracurricular activities.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Parents are actively involved with their child's education.	1	2	3	4	5

Characteristic	Very Low Importance				Very High Importance
Section D					
37. Teacher frequently participates in school extracurricular activities.	1	2	3	4	5
38. There is low student transience during the school year.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Curriculum objectives are used.	1	2	3	4	5
40. There is honest communication between student and teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Substantial time is set aside for individual student attention.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Teacher uses many teaching methods.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Student learning is long lasting, permanent.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Teacher shares personal experiences with students.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Classroom is self-contained.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Instruction is rarely interrupted by unplanned happenings.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Mix of ethnic, economic groups in the class.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Homework frequently assigned.	1	2	3	4	5
Section E					
49. Consistently high attendance.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Teacher not constrained by regulations stipulated by administrators.	1	2	3	4	5
51. Students enjoy learning on their own.	1	2	3	4	5
52. Teacher frequently discusses teaching with other teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
53. Classroom is neat in appearance.	1	2	3	4	5
54. Teacher time not spent on administrative tasks (e.g., milk money).	1	2	3	4	5
55. Teacher is aware of new teaching programs.	1	2	3	4	5
56. Teacher is aware of how class curriculum fits into the total school curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
57. Students are tested frequently to determine progress.	1	2	3	4	5
58. Students are neat in appearance.	1	2	3	4	5
59. Teacher contact with his/her students outside of class.	1	2	3	4	5
60. Teacher is neat in appearance.	1	2	3	4	5

Section F

61. PLEASE ADD ANY DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT ELEMENTARY CLASSROOMS NOT FOUND ON THIS LIST:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section G

62. Select the ten characteristics from those listed above that are the most important characteristics of excellent elementary classrooms and write the number corresponding to each characteristic you select on the following lines:

____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____

63. Select the ten characteristics from those listed above that are the least important characteristics of excellent elementary classrooms and write the number corresponding to each characteristic you select on the following lines:

____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____, ____